

Appendix G

Social Indicators and Social Monitoring

Effective management of Nonpoint Source (NPS) water pollution requires addressing both environmental conditions and the choices people make that impact the environment. Monitoring social indicators, like monitoring environmental indicators, yields valuable information about the direction you should take or how well your management strategies are working. If you are monitoring social indicators, developing a watershed management plan, or implementing actions from a watershed management plan that are intended to improve water quality by changing knowledge or behavior then this appendix may apply to you.

The U.S. EPA Region 5 Social Indicators Work Group developed a step-by-step system (the Social Indicator Planning and Evaluation System – or [SIPES](#)) for using social indicators to help plan, implement and evaluate NPS outreach and education projects. SIPES and the associated Social Indicator Data Management and Analysis (SIDMA) tool (described below) are required to be used by all Michigan NPS grantees that are conducting social monitoring funded with federal funds. The benefits of standard social monitoring protocols include better education and outreach components of watershed management plans, standardized protocols for social surveys across watersheds in Michigan, and assessments of the effectiveness of NPS outreach efforts at the watershed, regional, and state scale.

The SIDMA tool is a web-based project management aid that supports SIPES watershed projects (the home page for SIDMA is www.iwr.msu.edu/sidma). SIDMA can be used by project coordinators to collect, organize, and use social indicators related to water quality improvements.

SIDMA includes the following features:

- **Survey builder:** Provides survey questions to be selected and adapted for use by a watershed project.
- **Data input screens and database:** Use to input and store responses from questionnaires and other social indicator data.
- **Online survey tool:** Allows potential respondents to complete your social indicators survey online.
- **Data analysis tools:** Use to generate statistics from survey data.
- **Report creating tools:** Provides assistance for communicating social indicator data including custom made graphs and charts.

NPS grant funded projects should use the SIPES guidance and SIDMA tool as follows:

- Watershed management planning projects are encouraged to use the SIPES guidance and SIDMA tool when developing baseline information regarding existing knowledge and behavior related NPS issues. It should be noted that the results of a SIPES/SIDMA assessment can easily be used to develop recommendations for education and outreach activities to address element E of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's nine required elements of a watershed management plan.
- Implementation projects with tasks related to social monitoring or monitoring to assess the effectiveness of education and outreach activities are required to use the SIPES guidance and will typically use the SIDMA tool.
- Projects focused on implementation of education and outreach activities (without an effectiveness monitoring element) are encouraged to consider the SIPES guidance.

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